WebBuyer

SITE REVIEWS FOR ONLINE SHOPPING

BY KEVIN SAVETZ

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Tech Shopping

aberdeeninc.com

Targeting the savvy consumer who craves speeds and feeds, **Aberdeen** offers extensive specs on a wide variety of computers and accessories. Custom configurators let you build a unique desktop, rackmount server, or notebook.

accessmicro.com

Access Micro stocks tons of items ranging from broadband routers to complete desktop systems. The help desk and hardware guide provide aid to first-time visitors, and the clearance area offers returned items and old inventory for below wholesale cost.

allcables.com

Plug it in and hook it up at **AllCables,** which sells fiber-optic cables, IEEE 1394 (FireWire) cables, printer cables, power cables—cables of every description. Most include a lifetime replacement warranty.

allstarshop.com

The **Allstar Microelectronics** catalog of PC accessories includes graphics cards, motherboards, and peripherals. The selection in some categories is modest, but prices are reasonable, and you'll find an ample amount of information about each product.

batteriesdirect.com

Empower yourself! **Batteries Direct** sells batteries for laptops, camcorders, and portable phones, as well as AC adapters for portable computers. If the kids' toys are running on empty, check out the selection of rechargeable nickel-metal-hydride batteries in sizes ranging from AAA to D.

blackbox.com

Get connected! Specializing in network products, **Black Box's** extensive catalog of storage, cabling, and surge-protection products—plus other connectivity accessories—can be viewed online or off.

buy.com

This monstrous, multifaceted site sells computers, electronics, books, movies, office products, and more. With a whopping 1 million items, **Buy.com** offers a price-matching policy on most of them.

buycase.com

Banish the boring beige box forever! **Colorcase** offers more than 60 unusual computer cases, including translucent-plastic, aluminum, mirrored, and "character" cases. (Be sure to check out the doggy- and kitty-shaped cases.)

buydig.com

A site for shovels and trowels? No, **BuyDig.Com** offers digital tools and gadgets including digital cameras, fax machines, PDAs, DVD players, and video-capture devices.

www.buyuptime.com

BuyUptime.com's protection and security inventory includes uninterruptible power supplies and accessories, batteries, and power-distribution units. The selection ranges from simple surge protectors to industrial transformers.

cablestogo.com

Cables To Go sells every conceivable cable you might need for your PC, from standard SCSI to esoteric system-specific cables. You'll also find networking products, bulk cable, tools, and test equipment. You might even get lucky and snatch up what you need at a bargain price in the site's closeout section.

DECEMBER

COMPUTER SHOPPER Site of the month

half.com

Think eBay—but with instant gratification. Like the popular online-auction sites, **Half.com** is a person-to-person marketplace. Unlike other online auctions, sellers set the price at Half.com. For buyers, there's no waiting to find out if you'll get an item: Sales are first-come, first-served.

At Half.com, you won't see the selection philosophy of eBay, so don't expect to find Beanie Babies or human kidneys. The categories are limited to music, books, movies/DVDs, video games, computers, electronics, sporting goods, and trading cards.

The media selection—books, music, movies, and games—is where the site shines. The assortment includes a mixture of new, used, recent, and ancient items, and the site is always clear about the condition of preowned items (ranging from "like new" to "acceptable") and price options. For any item, you'll usually have a choice of sellers and prices.

Half.com's flat-rate shipping policy for books, music, movies, and games means you'll avoid another auction landmine: being surprised by a seller's unrealistic expectation of shipping fees. But order holiday gifts early: Many sellers do not offer Priority Mail shipping, and the relatively slow USPS Media Mail rate is standard.

SITE REVIEWS

www.cd-recordable.com

The U.S-owned and -based **CD-Recordable Factory Store** actually manufactures the discs it sells. This easy-to-navigate site stocks a massive variety of CD-R discs, including colorless and tinted media, plus disc-packaging and -storage accessories.

CDW

cdw.com

CDW offers an enormous array of hardware and software for business. Create side-by-side comparisons in many product categories, and search out dollar-saving deals on the rebates-and-coupons page.

circotech.com

If a beautiful PC case stops you in your tracks, visit **Circo Technology,** which offers a large selection of attractive and functional cases. For the maximum in upgradability, check out the roomy "cube" cases.

compgeeks.com

Revenge of the nerds, indeed! Shop the **Computer Geeks Discount Outlet** for new, discontinued, and refurbished computer gear. It's a trove for the do-it-yourselfer piecing together a desktop system. The site features low prices and complete specs on every product.

compusa.com

The well-organized **CompUSA** rounds out the usual selection of PC hardware, peripherals, and accessories with areas devoted to electronics and gadgets. The frugal won't want to overlook the site's outlet section.

computergate.com

Computer Gate promises a 30-day satisfaction return policy on its products, which include peripherals and build-to-order PCs. Check out the Quick Index: You'll never have to poke around for the right product again.

Computers4Sure.com

computers4sure.com

In the 19 well-stocked departments at **Computers-4Sure.com** you'll find a broad spectrum of products, including networking equipment, PDAs, and scanners. Bargain hunters can quickly sniff out deals on the Clearance pages.

computersurplusoutlet.com

You're just crazy enough to build your own desktop system, aren't you? Then you'll feel right at home at **Computer Surplus Outlet,** where you'll find closeouts, overstocks, refurbished equipment, and liquidation items. You might even stumble on an assembly-required Pentium system for less than $100.

crucial.com

One of the largest providers of memory upgrades on the Web, **Crucial Technology** offers free shipping on RAM for 11,000 computer systems. The company backs its memory with a lifetime warranty.

dalco.com

Dalco Electronics stocks everything from motherboards to monitors. If you're a bargain hunter, start with the specials found on the home page. You'll also find a helpful motherboard/CPU and memory configurator.

dartek.com

Dartek sells a remarkable selection of hardware, software, networking equipment, and office furniture. Well-designed features include printable spec sheets, customers' product ratings, a product-watch feature, and a frequent-buyers' club.

directron.com

Specializing in computer peripherals, **Directron.com** offers low prices on a wide variety of name-brand and OEM products. Most items include a 30-day guarantee, and any order earns you the right to pick through the Free Stuff bin. Savvy savers will appreciate the Clearance area, as well as frequent-customer and volume-purchasing discounts.

dirtcheapdrives.com

If you can store data on it, this site sells it. **Dirt Cheap Drives** offers hard drives, CD-ROM and DVD hardware, and drive arrays, with detailed technical information about each product. This decade-old company also stocks mounting kits, media, and accessories.

ecost.com

The **eCost.com** catalog spans the full range of PC hardware and software, including ready-to-use systems, peripherals, accessories, and applications. The site features both fastidious organization and personalized product recommendations.

emscomputing.com

EMS Computing offers a 40,000-product catalog, an easy-to-navigate site, and low shipping charges. A monthly newsletter delivers informative tips on choosing and using computer accessories.

www.freecolorprinters.com

It's not a scam—"qualified organizations" can indeed apply for free color printers at **FreeColorPrinters,** a subsidiary of Xerox. You'll need to commit to printing a certain number of pages per month and buy your supplies directly from Xerox. See the site for more details.

harddrive.com

Pack rat? **HardDrive.com** has your storage solution. Choosy shoppers will find extensive choices in IDE, SCSI, and IEEE 1394 (FireWire) drives, along with other peripherals. For fashion-forward computer users, the site offers an array of black PC components, from cases to scanners. After all, black *does* go with everything.

hypermicro.com

Hyper Microsystems specializes in storage. The catalog includes CD-ROM and CD-RW drives, tape backup drives, hard drives, and RAID adapters. Check the Hyper Bundles for ready-to-use RAID and CD-RW starter kits.

igo.com

iGo calls itself a "mobile technology outfitter." Use the site to outfit your cell phone, laptop, or PDA with chargers, batteries, and other necessary accessories. The iGo Alerts feature delivers free customized news to your portable device.

inkfarm.com

We're not sure what farm printer ink comes from, but we do know that **Inkfarm.com** sells ink and toner with flat-rate shipping. Choose "official" OEM ink or save money with aftermarket ink that often costs about half the price.

Inkfarm.com

insight.com

With more than 110,000 items for sale, **Insight** offers an impressive catalog of hardware and software. Customized sites are available for shoppers in the United States, Canada, Germany, and the United Kingdom.

jandr.com

Hardware, software, home-office products, and appliances abound at **J&R Computer World,** the New York City-based superstore famed for its selection and, ahem, "brusque" service. Avoid the attitude with this online version, which specializes

SECTION CONTINUES ON PAGE 154

in cameras, both digital and traditional film models. Product help is available via e-mail, online chat, and phone.

lanblvd.com

Wrestling with your old router? Network card not working? **LanBlvd.com** specializes in networking products. You'll find hubs, routers, interface cards, and wireless stations, along with other essentials for your LAN.

laptoptravel.com

Laptop Travel is road-warrior heaven! The site sells portable-computing and international-travel gear, including electrical adapters, modem converters/couplers, and security accessories. You'll find traditional and "camouflaged" laptop carrying cases, laptop RAM, and storage add-ons.

megahaus.com

MegaHaus' catalog of "everything high-tech" offers a full spectrum of products, from mice to monitors. The site specializes in storage, including hard drives, RAID solutions, and CD recorders.

mei-microcenter.com

MEI-Micro Center offers new and refurbished desktops from Compaq, eMachines, Hewlett-Packard, and PowerSpec. You'll also find a decent selection of peripherals. Rummage through the bargain bin for deals on closeouts, refurbished units, and overstocks.

memman.com

All of the desktop and laptop memory sold at **Memory Man** carries a lifetime warranty, and the site's reference guide offers RAM-configuration info for all brand-name computers.

memory4less.com

Memory4Less.com offers low prices on a wide variety of RAM. If you don't know the memory requirements of your computer or digital camera, the site will help clue you in.

www.mobile-mania.com

Quickly head to **Mobilemania.com** for digital cameras, e-mail devices, PDAs, cases, and adapters. You'll find the bountiful selection a haven for folks (like you) who are always on the go.

mobileplanet.com

MobilePlanet is home to a gaggle of high-tech tools and toys for mobile professionals. The selection includes notebooks, PDAs, wireless communication products, and travel-size printers and scanners.

mobilizenow.com

On the go? Gear up at **MobilizeNow,** where you'll find the gadgets you need, including GPS receivers, radar detectors, and cellular and PDA accessories. Tell the site what country you're headed for, and it will spit out a list of appropriate adapter plugs, phone adapters, and voltage converters.

SITE REVIEWS

monitorexpress.com

Monitor Express sells 500 models of new monitors, plus money-saving refurbished ones. The catalog also includes monitor cables, video adapters, and screen filters.

monitoroutlet.com

From inexpensive 14-inchers to elegant and pricey flat-panel LCDs, **Monitor Outlet** proffers a wide range of displays. The site sells units from 24 manufacturers, plus specialty monitors such as touch screens, wide-aspect-ratio units, and projectors.

motherboardexpress.com

Oh, mama. **Motherboard Express** was made for PC-building connoisseurs. Shoppers can filter the selection of 100-plus boards by manufacturer, chipset, processor type, case type, onboard controller, or number of CPUs.

motherboards.com

With a wide selection of motherboards from seven manufacturers, do-it-yourselfers will revel in handpicking the perfect innards for their new PCs at **Motherboards.com.** Order a motherboard and CPU together, and the company will configure and test them for you.

IEEE 1394 (FireWire) Peripherals

www.allfirewire.com

Need to know about the latest FireWire gadgets? **AllFirewire** presents hot-off-the-press product news. Click on a category, such as still cameras, hubs, or printers, for a list of compatible peripherals.

apdrives.com

One part FireWire and one part USB, **APDrives.com** offers direct sales of hard drives, CD-RW, DVD-ROM, and DVD-RAM drives, plus cables, cards, and hubs. Combo drives are compatible with both FireWire and USB.

atomicfirewire.com

Atomic FireWire sells a limited assortment of enclosures—FireWire drive cases that come with everything but a hard drive. Add your own IDE or ATA drive, and you'll have a speedy external drive in no time.

firewiredirect.com

FirewireDirect.com yields a small selection of storage peripherals, video cameras, and RAID solutions. Build your network from the ground up with the catalog of cables, adapters, hubs, and repeaters.

www.firewirestuff.com

Offering a great inventory but poor Web design, **FireWireStuff** stocks lots of goodies, including drives, peripherals, PCI cards, and PC Cards. You'll find plenty of tech specs on each product, but this site's confusing navigation leaves something to be desired.

www.firewire-1394.com

If you have visions of speedy new peripherals dancing in your head, visit **FireWire-1394.com.** The site's selection includes drives, Webcams, and video-capture cards, plus cables, hubs, and other connectivity essentials.

fwdepot.com

Catering to both Mac and PC users, **FireWire Depot** sells drives, cables, repeaters, and more. You can buy a driveless enclosure, then populate it with your own drive. A helpful guide explains how to build your own FireWire drive.

1394store.com

The 1394 Store stocks networking, digital-video, and storage products that use IEEE 1394 (FireWire) connectivity. It also includes a selection of FireWire networking kits that let you connect your desktops and portables for speedy throughput.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY BILL RIESER

SITE REVIEWS

newegg.com

You won't have to shell out big bucks or scramble for hardware at **NewEgg.com**. Peck at the site's listings of new products and top sellers, then take a crack at the specials. Order carefully—the 15 percent restocking fee might make you squawk.

nxgen.com

Next Generation's Web site is densely packed with prebuilt computers and peripherals ranging from cables to graphics cards. The selection is huge, and the site provides full specs and plenty of details about each product.

1coolpc.com

A cool computer is a happy computer. **1CoolPC** specializes in fans, heat sinks, and other cooling devices for your CPU, graphics card, monitor, hard drive, and other components that tend to swelter.

outpost.com

Outpost.com sells around 170,000 products—a full range of computer hardware, plus cameras, electronics, and innovative specialty products from partner companies.

palmgear.com

Users of handhelds will appreciate the extensive selection of free and commercial programs downloadable from **PalmGear.com.** You can buy PDA hardware and accessories, or sign up for an e-mailing list to receive information about new software, news, and user tips.

Consumer Electronics

bestbuy.com

Best Buy's site stocks a wide array of home audio and video components, portable audio gadgets, digital and traditional cameras, telephones, and home-office accoutrements. If time is of the essence, place an order online and pick it up at your local store.

consumer-direct.com

Shopping for something simple, such as a surge protector? Or complicated, like a C-Band satellite receiver? Either way, **Consumer Direct Warehouse** provides ample brands and styles to explore.

crutchfield.com

In business for 27 years, **Crutchfield** assembles an impressive assortment of audio and video products for your home and car. Inexpensive two- to three-day shipping is standard for most orders. The extensive Info Center offers guides to choosing components and installation tips.

800.com

800.com Electronics hosts a colossal selection of home audio and video components, digital cameras, personal audio devices, and telephones. Customer service includes live online help and community forums.

hifi.com

Hifi.com has home audio and home-theater products to please budget shoppers and discriminating audiophiles. Unique features and policies, including price matching and a 45-day satisfaction guarantee, set it apart from other Web consumer-electronics stores.

radioshack.com

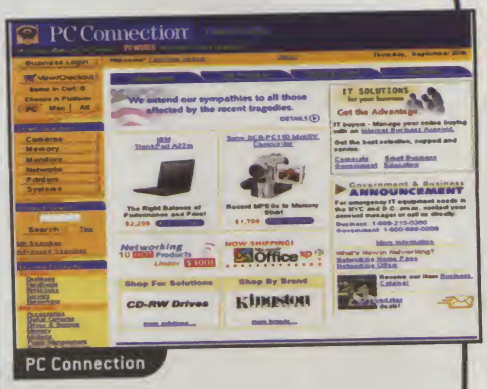
"The Shack" stocks gadgets galore, including home-security and -automation devices, electronics kits, telephones, answering machines, and radio-controlled toys. Cool site features include a gift selector and a battery finder. If your new toy confuses you, **RadioShack.com** offers online manuals for thousands of products.

remotecentral.com

Choosing a universal remote control for your home-theater system can be daunting, but **Remote Central** can help. The site provides expert and hands-on user reviews, plus an interactive Clicker Picker to help you pick the remote control of your dreams.

pcconnection.com

PC Connection offers bargains on a colossal variety of PC and Macintosh products. Smart Selectors ease the search process for those looking for turnkey systems, cameras, printers, monitors, or memory to fit specific guidelines.



www.pcliquidator.com

The getting's good at **PC Liquidator,** a site that offers clearance, refurbished, and overstocked hardware and software. The inventory is always changing and usually inexpensive. You can find many hardware choices for under $10—and software for 99 cents.

pcmall.com

Shoppers at **PC Mall** receive free lifetime technical support on the site's vast selection of computers, hardware, and software. The site's business-solutions forum offers corporate leasing and volume pricing. Apple-heads can find all their favorite Macintosh products at the **Mac Mall** sister site ***(www.macmall.com)***.

pcnation.com

You'll pledge allegiance to **PCNation** after seeing its catalog of 70,000 hardware, software, and networking products. The home page offers links to "best buys" and to products with special rebates.

pczone.com

PC Zone stocks an impressive selection of all things PC. You'll find links to a clearance area and other stores: **Mac Zone** and **Electronics Zone.** Printable rebate coupons can save you some cash.

www.pdaorder.com

PDAOrder sells personal digital assistants preloaded with the software you need. Bundles include programs for physicians, professionals, financial mavens, and college students. The site also offers reviews, feature articles, and how-to guides.

provantage.com

Provantage offers PC products from more than 1,000 manufacturers, including a large selection of books and training materials. The site's Personal Tracking List feature lets customers build a list of product bookmarks, then monitor prices and availability.

SITE REVIEWS

www.sg3d.com

Sunway Graphics specializes in PC graphics cards, offering a wide selection of powerful 3D accelerators. You'll also see a smaller selection of other graphics products: TV-tuner cards, videoconferencing equipment, and video-capture cards.

CNET Shopper

shopper.cnet.com

The **CNET Shopper** search engine takes the guesswork out of finding a deal on hardware, software, and accessories. The price-drop-alerts feature will send you e-mail when the cost of a coveted gadget falls. (CNET Networks is *Computer Shopper's* parent company.)

sparco.com

Looking for that something extra? Check out **Sparco.com's** list of products that come bundled with "free stuff." The site stocks more than 130,000 products, and it offers a list of discounted items for students and faculty members of academic institutions.

ssdonline.com

At **State Street Direct,** shoppers will discover a huge selection of computers and imaging products. Digital-camera shoppers will find many items of interest, including customized comparison charts.

State Street Direct

staples.com

Yeah, they've got that. **Staples'** Web site offers a liberal price-matching policy on computer accessories, software, and office supplies. If you order similar items often, you can set up personalized shopping lists. The company can occasionally take its time shipping items out to you, though, so beware.

superwarehouse.com

SuperWarehouse.com stocks printers, monitors, hard drives, scanners, digital cameras, and laptops. The site's selection of printers is particularly large, and even includes plotters, dot matrix units, and other special-use printers.

suppliesusa.com

Feed your PC's ravenous appetite for media, ink, and other consumables at **Suppliesusa.com,** a distributor of brand-name printer and computer supplies. The catalog includes data-storage supplies, printer accessories, papers, and film.

tccomputers.com

In business since 1988, **TC Computers** sells fully configured systems, motherboards, and peripherals. The company's specialty is motherboards; buyers can choose to have motherboards and processors preassembled and tested without paying extra.

tcwo.com

Thompson's Computer Warehouse Outlet offers only a small selection of computer products. You may find only a dozen monitors or four CD-ROM drives, but the prices are fantastic.

techstore.com

TechStore.com offers hardware in dozens of categories and highlights monthly top sellers. The site also sells software, ranging from productivity suites to children's titles.

thenerds.net

With no misgivings about the tech-savvy of its company or customers, **TheNerds.net** offers 60,000 computer products, ranging from cables and connectors to graphics cards, at its fast and friendly site. The liberal 30-day return policy will protect you from getting stuck with the wrong product.

tigerdirect.com

TigerDirect's site offers 50,000 products, including computers from Compaq, Gateway, and IBM. Up for a little adventure? Order a build-it-yourself custom PC kit, and let the fun begin!

triocomputers.com

TrioComputers.com offers an impressive array of computer accessories and configure-your-own PCs. Read the site's 10-step tutorial on building your own PC to see if you're up to the challenge.

tristatecomputer.com

You'll have three times the fun at **Tri-State Camera and Computer.** The selection includes digital and analog cameras, computer peripherals, and home/office necessities, all with a money-back guarantee.

warehouse.com

The four "warehouses" under **MicroWarehouse's** roof sell PC hardware, Mac products, datacomm components, and supplies. The site accepts corporate, educational, and government accounts, and offers business leases on several of its products.

MicroWarehouse
ComputerSolutions.
The MicroWarehouse employees and I would like to express our deepest sympathies for all of the families affected by Tuesday's tragedy.
Windows XP
Trade-In Program
MicroWarehouse

Direct PC Vendors

adamant.com

Adamant Computers' desktop and notebook systems are backed by a three-year warranty and lifetime technical support. Systems are highly configurable, including your choice of AMD and Intel processors.

www.alienware.com

Alienware can build you a gamer's dream machine, high-performance workstation, or desktop video system. Cases are available in a rainbow of out-of-this-world colors.

buyabs.com

Exceptional customer support on custom-configured desktop and notebook systems is the goal at **ABS Computer Technologies.** All systems include a 30-day money-back guarantee. Some units are available with Linux preinstalled.

buy-atlas.com

Atlas Micro offers desktop PCs built around Pentium, Celeron, and AMD processors. Buyers can use drop-down menus to create a custom configuration and are protected by a reasonable 30-day return policy.

compaq.com

Three arms of **Compaq Computer's** site offer computers for everyone. See the Compaq AtHome division ***(athome.compaq.com)*** for home and home-office systems, DirectPlus ***(www.directplus.compaq.com)*** for business PCs and servers, or the Compaq Factory Outlet Superstore ***(www.compaqfactoryoutlet.com)*** for big bargains.

cyberpowerinc.com

Each **CyberPower** PC includes a three-year warranty and 30-day money-back guarantee.

SITE REVIEWS

The site's service area includes downloadable drivers and lifetime tech support.

dell.com

Dell Computer's electronic storefront has always led the way in ease of use. The site is jam-packed with detailed information that makes it a snap to match a machine to your needs. Each system is configurable to the nth degree via drop-down menus, and you can get quick access to online support customized for your PC.

www.fujitsu-pc.com

Fujitsu's site focuses on portable computing, including notebook PCs and pen-based tablet computers. Each computer includes several warranty options. A trade-in program offers cash back on your old computer when you upgrade to certain models.

gateway.com

One of the biggest players in online computer sales, **Gateway** has an enormous and informative site that sells custom-built desktops and portables, delivering them on time 98 percent of the time, according to BizRate.com.

hpshopping.com

At this site, **Hewlett-Packard** sells its lines of desktop and notebook computers, handhelds, PDAs, digital cameras, scanners, and printers. The site makes repeat purchases simple for businesses and individuals.

ibm.com/products

ShopIBM sells business and home PCs, notebooks, servers, thin clients, networking equipment, and peripherals. The build-to-order option allows buyers to customize a new desktop.

idot.com

From low-cost budget models to powerful monster machines, **iDot** offers customized desktop and notebook computers with a good return policy.

microexpress.net

Micro Express offers built-to-order desktop and notebook computers featuring AMD and Intel processors. Each system includes a 30-day guarantee and a two- or four-year warranty. Business leases are available.

micronpc.com

One of the largest direct PC vendors, **MicronPC** sells computers to home-office users, larger businesses, government buyers, and buyers outside the United States. The Factory Outlet offers refurbished and discontinued systems.

nutrend.com

Custom-configure a home or business desktop PC at **NuTrend Computer Products.** The company stocks machines running your choice of Intel or AMD processors. Each system comes with a three-year warranty.

Books and Music

amazon.com

If **Amazon.com** were a retail store, no doubt it would dwarf the Mall of America. This easily navigated site has an unbeatable selection of books, CDs, and DVDs. You'll also find computers, electronics, toys, and practically anything else you could possibly want.

bn.com

With millions of titles in its inventory, **Barnes & Noble's** site is a book lover's dream. The site also sells e-books, music, DVDs, videos, posters, software, and magazines. Order more than two items, and shipping is free.

cdnow.com

Custom CDs are only one of the many gift options at **CDnow.** Shoppers will also find an enormous assortment of music, videos, and DVDs. An "electronics playground" showcases all manner of digital gadgets.

cheap-cds.com

Don't be turned off by the site's no-frills interface. (It looks like it was designed in 1994.) Most of the discs at **Cheap-CDs** cost less than $12. You'll find a good selection, and you can preview tracks online.

codysbooks.com

An independent bookstore based in Berkeley, Calif., **Cody's Books** offers an easily searchable catalog of 150,000 in-stock titles. The site provides thoughtful recommendations and reading lists.

secondspin.com

Bolster your music collection without emptying your wallet. **SecondSpin** is a used-music store that sells a wide, even eclectic, variety of music. You can sell your tired discs for cash or credit.

towerrecords.com

In addition to a massive catalog of CDs, **Tower Records** stocks media that some have already forgotten: vinyl and cassette tapes. If you prefer CDs, you'll find more than 3,000 discs for under $10.

NuTrend Computer Products

www.polywell.com/onlinestore

Polywell Computers may not be a household name, but the company offers desktops, notebooks, workstations, and servers that are worth a look. You'll find massive custom-configuration options.

sagernotebook.com

Specializing in notebook computers, **Sager** offers a variety of options, from budget machines to speedy multimedia units. Service includes a 72-hour repair-turnaround guarantee and lifetime free tech support. Business leases are available.

shopprostar.com

Each computer in **ProStar Computer's** line of notebook PCs is backed by a 30-day money-back guarantee, a speedy-repair promise, and free tech support.

SITE REVIEWS

shoptoshiba.com

The Web home for **Toshiba's** stylish portables and desktop systems doesn't offer as many build-to-order options as some other sites, but it's loaded with plenty of extended-warranty and lease options.

sonystyle.com/vaio

SonyStyle is a sleek-looking site selling Sony's line of VAIO desktops and notebooks, plus digital cameras, displays, and storage devices.

store.apple.com

Apple Computer's well-designed site allows you to custom-configure any Macintosh computer and offers a wide array of Mac-compatible software and accessories. Beware the one-click ordering feature, however—using it may be a bit too convenient for impulse buyers!

unitedmicro.com

Take home a preconfigured Intel- or AMD-based PC, or start with a bare-bones system and let **United Micro** install the components of your choice.

www.winbook.com

Focusing exclusively on portables, **WinBook Computer** offers machines with a 30-day money-back guarantee, a one-year warranty, and free technical support. Ironically, some of the site's best deals, the daily "Web specials," can only be ordered by phone.

<PC Resources

consumerreview.com

ConsumerReview.com helps consumers research products before they buy. The site provides more than 200,000 reviews and ratings for tech gadgets and products for the home, car, and kids.

dcresource.com

The **Digital Camera Resource Page** is an unbiased, comprehensive source of information for digital-camera buyers and owners. Shoppers can glean necessary info from the FAQ page, buyer's guide, message boards, and reviews.

dealnews.com

Deal yourself in! Updated daily, **Dealnews** is a fantastic buyer's guide that reports on low-price specials in Web stores. Check out sister site **Dealmac** for Mac-oriented gotta-haves, and **Dealram** for memory deals.

gomez.com

Gómez.com offers ratings and customer reviews of e-commerce sites in two dozen categories, ranging from Web-based computer stores to drugstores, apparel vendors to online brokers. Check the ratings on ease of use, customer confidence, and cost.

hardwarereincarnation.com

Let your laptop live again! **Hardware Reincarnation** is a guide to repairing and upgrading laptop computers. The site includes a database of LCD screens—find out which laptops' displays are compatible. You'll also find upgrade tips and a guide to laptop repair.

www.linhardware.com

Will that sleek new laptop run Linux? Find out with the **ZDNet Linux Hardware Database,** where users share their experiences regarding which hardware's compatible with Linux—and which isn't. For the stuff that is, download the appropriate driver and put it to work. (ZDNet is owned by CNET Networks, *Computer Shopper's* parent company.)

motherboards.org

Motherboards.org is packed with motherboard news, reviews, specifications, and tips. Its comprehensive database of 1,400 products includes driver information, technical details, and overclocking hints.

www.nexgear.com

If you've got a need to know when it comes to gadgets, visit **NexGear.** This site offers news and notes about PDAs, mobile phones, PCs, video games, and other techno-goodies.

nextag.com

NexTag is a sophisticated buying service that can help frugal shoppers find the lowest possible prices on computer equipment, electronics, books, music, and videos. Entering your ZIP code allows NexTag to calculate shipping and tax for accurate pricing.

pchell.com

When computer glitches are driving you over the edge, visit **PC Hell.** The site will soothe your jangled nerves with virus-detection tips, help for avoiding upgrade traps, and instructions for removing annoying "spyware."

pdastreet.com

No matter which PDA you use, there's something for you at **PDAStreet.com.** This multifaceted site delivers reviews, software downloads, user tips, and classified ads for Windows CE, Palm, Visor, Psion, and RIM users.

resellerratings.com

Want a second opinion before you share your credit-card number with an unfamiliar online merchant? Check **ResellerRatings.com,** which provides customer evaluations of 2,000 online hardware vendors. Take reviews with a grain of salt: We've seen dozens of negative messages posted by one (very unhappy) person.

usbworkshop.com

USB Workshop is a friend to anyone in the market for USB components. You'll find specifications, user ratings, and photos for hundreds of peripherals, cables, and sundry USB contraptions. Explore the lists of most-popular and most-talked-about products, then zoom in on peripherals compatible with your favorite operating system.

<Software Sites

buypcsoft.com

Buypcsoft.com offers software for Windows PCs in categories from business management to voice recognition. It's an efficient site with a good selection and high ratings among previous and current customers.

chumbo.com

Chumbo.com's selection of PC and Mac software includes games, business software, kids' programs, and operating systems. You'll also find software for your TV—that is, a good selection of DVD movies.

compuexpert.com

If you crave games for your Mac or PC, stop by **Compuexpert.com.** The categories include racing simulations, sports games, strategy games, and adventure titles. Colorful descriptions and screenshots are given for most titles.

Compuexpert.com

cws.internet.com

Stroud's Consummate Winsock Applications List is the ultimate one-stop download site for Internet software, including Web-development tools, browsers, and chat clients. You'll find comprehensive file lists, ratings, and extensive reviews. A free newsletter provides summaries of new software releases

download.cnet.com

CNET Download.com will help you find shareware and free software, linking to thousands of PC, Mac, Linux, and PDA titles. Well-written newsletters and down-to-earth reviews help you to locate the perfect program. (CNET Networks is *Computer Shopper's* parent company.)

dragon.ca

Next time you get an itchy trigger finger, visit **The Dragon's Den.** The site sells a gaggle of games for

SITE REVIEWS

the PC and video-game consoles. Although the games are in Canada, prices are available in both U.S. and Canadian dollars, and shipping is reasonable.

ebgames.com

EBgames.com is a game-player's paradise, selling new and preowned titles for PCs and every game console under the sun. The site's new EB1 service lets users with broadband Internet access rent PC games online.

handango.com

Handango offers thousands of commercial software downloads for Palm OS, Pocket PC, Windows CE, and RIM handhelds. Newbies can start with the site's tutorials and recommendations for first-time buyers.

jumbo.com

Jumbo is a fitting name for this monstrous file archive, featuring programs for sale, demos, shareware, and freeware. Jumbo Guides offer articles on backing up, sharing MP3s, and other computing topics.

999central.com

The price is right at **999central.com,** which stocks 100 software and DVD titles, each for $5—shipping included. Educational, entertainment, and lifestyle applications are the most common.

Toys

amazon.com/toys

Amazon.com's toy selection is vast and diverse in part because the company has bought or partnered with many toy stores, including Imaginarium.com, Toys R Us, and Back To Basics Toys.

areyougame.com

Jump three spaces to AreYouGame.com, which claims to offer the Net's largest collection of games and puzzles. Indeed, the site serves up a vast range of diversions for all ages. Browse popular favorites, including Monopoly, Colorforms, and Mr. Potato Head. But it's not all kid stuff: Adults will find mysteries, tricky jigsaw puzzles, and spicy romantic games.

eurotoyshop.com

You can discover plenty of unusual gifts at EuroToyShop, a U.S. company that specializes in European toys. This virtual toy box includes dolls and dollhouses, building toys, Brio trains, and pull toys.

fao.com

FAO Schwarz's illustrious house of toys includes a long roster of popular characters from Curious George to SpongeBob SquarePants, as well as a wide selection of collectible and playtime Barbie dolls. The site also includes several specialty boutiques, a baby boutique, and a bargain bazaar.

hearthsong.com

HearthSong offers a distinctive array of timeless toys, art and craft supplies, games, and puzzles. The site specializes in educational classics, without a single Disney or Pokémon character in the catalog.

kbkids.com

KB Toys, one of the nation's largest toy retailers, has one of the best sites for toy shopping, **KBkids.com.** In addition to Lego, Barbie, and other brands, the site tempts the tots with video games, software, and collectibles. Browse the site by age group, price, or toy category.

smarterkids.com

Promising "great toys for young minds," **SmarterKids'** toy selection is for children ages 12 and under. Shop by brand, such as Sesame Street or Playskool, by character, or by theme. Specialty Centers showcase toys for gifted kids and those with special needs.

softwareoutlet.com

Calling all cheapskates! Come check it out. **SoftwareOutlet.com's** a veritable virtual bargain bin. You'll find dirt-cheap apps—older versions, titles from defunct companies, or just plain funky stuff.

www.tucows.com

It's not just bovine bliss: **Tucows** is also an incredible archive of freeware and shareware. Plenty of local mirror sites keep the download process speedy. The category list and reviews make finding the software you seek a breeze.

wiredlounge.com

Here's a site hard-core gamers will want to plug in to. **WiredLounge.com** serves up oodles of recently released games. The site is packed with refreshingly honest reviews, plus plenty of screenshots to leave you wanting more.

zdnet.com/downloads

You'll need more bandwidth. Download shareware, freeware, and demos from **ZDNet Downloads.** The site offers daily software highlights and quick links to the week's most popular software. Every program is rated, reviewed, and checked for viruses, so your new software won't come with any unpleasant surprises. (ZDNet is owned by CNET Networks, *Computer Shopper's* parent company.) ▼